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An Event Par Excellence: International Conference of the Department of English Language and Literature at UMT

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An Event Par Excellence: International Conference of the Department of English Language and Literature at UMT

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International Conference of the Department of English Language and Literature (ICDELL) was organized on April 6-7, 2019. The event was supported and funded by University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Allied Book Company (Lahore), and Multi-Line Books (Lahore). The Conference combined together keen researchers and innovative practitioners of theoretical and applied linguistics and English literature to an interactive and stimulating forum which turned out to be a premier, vibrant and trend-setting event for both local and international researchers because of the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of its thematic focus.

The event attracted more than 350 international and national presenters and participants including invited speakers from UK, USA, Canada, China, and South Africa, scholars and faculty members from Jamshoro, Kohat, Malakand, Sialkot, Karachi, Gujranwala, Lasbela, Skardu, D.G.Khan, Faisalabad, Islamabad, Mandi Bahuddin, Burewala, Lower and Upper Dir, Multan, Azad Kashmir, Karachi, and students from UMT (Lahore Campus), GIFT University, UMT (Sialkot Campus), University of Education, COMSATS University Islamabad (Lahore campus), and different colleges of Lahore.

ICDELL was structured to foster discussion between participants around the core theme of *Contemporary Trends in Linguistic and Literary Research*. This was achieved by hosting keynote addresses, plenary talks and research paper presentations on both days. Central themes of the sessions included: Emerging issues in Linguistics; Language Planning and Policy; Postcolonial and Post 9/11 Writings; Writings about Environment, Space and Place; Literary Adaptation and Visual Discourse; Language, Media and Discourse; Language Acquisition and Pedagogy; Translation, Interpretation and Cross-Cultural Communication; Contemporary Fiction, Drama, and Poetry; Life and Travel Writings; Women's Writings; Language and Society; Language, Planning and Policy.

Before the ICDELL event, a pre-conference seminar was arranged by the Department of English Language and Literature in which Prof. Dr. Francisco Marcos-Marin (Spanish Linguist, University of Texas, San Antonio, USA) presented his insights and perceptions about research publications. The seminar was attended by DELL faculty and students who brainstormed various problems and hitches pertaining to the publication process with the presenter in a convivial environment.

The Conference event started off with the tribute to the founding father of UMT, Prof Dr Hasan Sohaib Murad followed by a welcome note by the Chairman, Dr. Muhammad Shaban Rafi and keynote speeches by the eminent scholars of English Literature and Linguistics. The inaugural session encompassed diverse topics such as Post 9/11 fiction (Prof Dr Janet Wilson, The University of Northampton, United Kingdom); Cosmovision of Linguistics (Prof Dr Francisco A. Marcos Marín, University of Texas at San Antonio USA) and Policies and Politics on Linguistic Choices in Pakistan (Prof Dr Shahid Siddiqui, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Former Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad). These intellectually stimulating speeches and interactions were followed by a welcome address and note of thanks by the Dean (School of Social Sciences & Humanities, UMT) and ICDELL Chair, Prof Dr. Rukhsana Kausar.

The two-day conference comprised 2 plenary sessions including keynote speeches from both international and national speakers on important topics such as the Emergence of Historical Linguistics; Language and Literature in the Contemporary World; Colonial Literary Discourse; Identity and Narratives; Romanticism and South Asian Narratives, Scope of Pakistani English; Literature Mapping; First Language and Phonological Acquisition; Second Language Learning; Critical Dialogue and Eudaimonia; Rural and Urban Language; Language Education Policies and Politics.

The first day of the Conference was rounded up with an entertainment evening consisting of the drama performance of *The Pot of Gold*, a Roman comedy play, prepared by the students of MPhil English Literature and a sumptuous dinner for the invited guests. The dramatic enactment as well as the informal gathering and light tête-à-tête during the dinner served as a relaxing and highly enjoyable break after a hectic and intellectually demanding day.

ICDELL event covered 20 concurrent sessions, with 5 speakers per session. Each speaker was given 15 minutes to present, followed by 5-10 minutes for questions. The Conference concluded with the presentation of Conference report by Dr. Nadia Anwar (Assistant Professor, DELL), followed by closing remarks by Prof. Dr. Janet Wilson and Prof. Dr Francisco A. Marcos Marín. Certificates to the volunteers were distributed by the invited guests followed by a note of thanks by Dr. Muhammad Shaban Rafi (Chairperson, DELL).

The first day of Conference was covered by local news channels such as Lahore News and City 42. Eminent keynote speakers and various guest, who showed keen willingness to express their views about the Conference, were also interviewed by the channel media personals. Apart from the local media coverage, UMT media house provided detailed media coverage to the Two Day Conference.

The efforts put together by the Conference organizers helped meet the objectives of the conference which were set to: underscore different methods, themes, and factors that intervene the interface of language and literature; stimulate interdisciplinary research landscape by providing a platform to explore ideas about literature and language along with other modes of artistic expression related to the fields; encourage the conception and reception of innovative research methodologies and analytical models for the study of contextual realities.

The general feedback and observations about the Conference were overwhelming. Scholars, experts and researchers showed great satisfaction in terms of the hospitality, engagement, and seriousness with which the tasks were handled and carried out by the organizing team. Some

of the interviews taken by the media team were extremely encouraging and motivational with respect to the plethora of topics, issues, and content covered in the Conference. They regarded such supportive platforms inevitable since they serve as intellectual stimulants for the established and budding scholars and help them enhance the scope of their research.

